Rs. 10 crore. A proposal for enlarging the financial allocation of the existing PEAIS through obtaining funds from Central budgetary resources as well as the World Bank is under preparation.

(ii) States-specific budgetary and technical support for institutional strengthening and capacity building of Panchayats:

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj is lending its support to proposals sent by States for fully implementing the empowerment and strengthening of Panchayats. A State specific project for Panchayat strengthening is under implementation is Karnataka. Proposals received from Kerala, West Bengal and Bihar have been formally forwarded to the World Bank and details of such State-specific projects for these States are now being worked out.

(iii) Technical Assistance:

The Ministry has obtained approval for securing technical assistance from the World Bank, for Panchayati Raj related institutional reforms and action research.

(c) and (d) The PEAIS scheme envisages that all States, including Andhra Pradesh would be eligible to receive funds under it, if it shows progress in respect of the criteria stated out in the devolution index.

(e) Under the Backward Regions Grant Fund, the district has been taken as the unit for implementation. The scheme guidelines stipulate that each State will indicate the normative formula that will be used for the allocation of BRGF funds to each Panchayat and ULB (excluding capital cities/cities with a population of 1 million). The components that go into the formula may include any index that is prepared and accepted within the State which reflects backwardness or level of development. Therefore there is flexibility in the Scheme for provision of more funds to backward blocks within a backward district, under the BRGF. The question of changing the unit from the District to the Block is noted for further consideration.

Encroachment of forest land by land mafia

*9. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the guidelines fixed by Government to reclaim the forest land which has been illegally encroached by the land mafia;

(b) whether it is a fact that a large chunk of Government forest land was illegally encroached by land mafia in Himachal Pradesh particularly in Jubbal-Katkhai, Rohru and Chirgaon Tehsil; and

(c) if so, the action being contemplated by Government in this regard against the land mafia and concerned officials who are involved in this nexus with them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) The Ministry of Environment and Forests have not received information on any organized encroachment on forest land. However, encroachment on forest land by individuals has taken place at different times for cultivation and other purposes. We had issued detailed guidelines *vide* this Ministry's letter No. 30-1/90-FP dated 18.09.1990 for regularization of pre-1980 eligible encroachments.

(b) and (c) The information is being collected from the concerned State Government and will be laid on the Table of the House.